

11: WE BELIEVE | THE NICENE CREED

I | ONE BAPTISM

- In our final teaching on the Nicene creed, we will look at the last three lines.

we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and we look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

- Prior to Jesus's ascension, he met with his disciples and gave them the Great Commission. He instructed them not only to go out and to teach and make disciples, but also to baptize them.
- Baptism is what marks us out as belonging to God and his family.
- But what are we to make of this statement in the creed, 'one baptism for the remission of sins?'
- **First, what is meant by one baptism?**
 - Is it that we should only be baptized one time, once in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
 - In the centuries following Nicaea, Christians would disagree about what constituted a valid baptism.
 - We should view this statement in the same way we look at the broader unity of the faith as Paul stated in Ephesians.
 - **Ephesians 4:4-5** There is **one body** and **one Spirit**—just as you were called to the **one hope** that belongs to your call— **5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism**, **6 one God** and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
 - There is one baptism even as there is one Lord and one faith.
 - We acknowledge or confess one baptism because there are not different baptisms for different kinds of Christians.
 - There is only one baptism because there's only one Father, only one Lord, only one Spirit, one church, and only one faith.
- **Second, what is meant by baptism for the remission of sins?**
 - It is clear from the New Testament that baptism symbolizes a spiritual cleansing and purification and that baptism is tied to the forgiveness of sins.
 - **Acts 2:38** And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - Paul recounted what Ananias told him at his conversion:
 - **Acts 22:16** And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.
 - **Titus 3:5** he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

- **1 Peter 3:18, 21** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit...**Baptism, which corresponds to this**, now saves you, **not** as a **removal of dirt** from the body **but** as an **appeal to God for a good conscience**, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Baptism is an effective sign and seal of the forgiveness of sins it conveys.
- **1689 LBCF 29:1** Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ. To those baptized it is a sign of their fellowship with him in his death and resurrection, of their being grafted into him, of remission of sins, and of submitting themselves to God through Jesus Christ to live and walk in newness of life.
- Baptists would say, therefore, that baptism is to be given only to those who have repented of their sins and put their faith in Christ.
- **1689 LBCF 29:2** Those who personally profess repentance toward God and faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.
- There should be no doubt about the connection between baptism and the remission sins.
- **How are baptism and the remission of sins connected?**
 - Does this mean that when we are baptized all our sins are automatically wiped away? That is not what the Bible teaches.
 - Baptism is only efficacious when it is joined with faith.
 - Baptism has everything to do with the remission of sins and baptism does not automatically convey this remission to the recipient.
 - The word translated as 'for' is the Greek word *eis*, which can mean 'for,' 'in,' or 'into.'
 - To be baptized in or into the triune name or into Christ's death, is to be made the possession of God and to be bound up in the work of Christ.
 - It is a language of incorporation and identification.
 - The physical act of baptism points to these spiritual realities.
 - In the same way, to be baptized into (*eis*) the remission of sins means that baptism points to the forgiveness of sins.
 - Baptism identifies us as God's beloved people.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE

- It is important to note that this line of the creed begins with the verb translated 'we acknowledge,' or 'we confess.'
- We believe in God, the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. But we can confess one baptism for the remission of sins.
- We do not put confidence in the sign or in the act that is performed.
- We trust and believe in God; we confess our baptism.

II | FUTURE HOPE

and we look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

- The Creed ends by pointing us to the future.
- The last line begins with the verb, '*we look.*'
- We look forward to, we hope for the resurrection of our bodies and eternal life in the world to come. The Nicene Creed ends on a note of expectation and hope.
- Titus 2:13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

- The writer of Hebrews calls the doctrine of the bodily resurrection of the dead an elementary and foundational doctrine.
- It is a distinctly Christian doctrine.
- Acts 17, the Athenians mocked Paul at his teaching of the resurrection of the dead. They believed in the immortality of the soul and not the body. The Epicureans did not believe in eternal life, death was the end, so this was absurd.
- As we trust in Christ, we trust in his promise of new glorified bodies at his coming.
- Our bodies will be transformed and we will have a glorified body like his, a real physical body. Our bodies will live forever.

THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME

- It is not just a new quality of life that we are longing for, a life without pain, a life without sin, a life without sickness and suffering.
- We look forward to all of that, but more importantly, the life we look forward to is life with the triune God.
- There are two realities bound up in this last statement.
- God's redemption is not only about individual people but all of creation will be caught up this future redemption we look to and hope for.
- **Romans 8:18-23** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.
- **Revelation 21:1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.
- We cannot even begin to imagine what eternal life will be like.

- *“And for us, this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them, it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.”* —C.S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*
- The Nicene Creed is practical. It teaches us the heartbeat of the Christian faith.
- It teaches us who our God is and what he has done to save us.
- It teaches us how he now works through his church as we wait for the world to come.
- The baton of faith has been passed down to us from the apostles into our hands now over 2,000 years later.
- These are unchanging truths we hold on to in an ever-changing world.
- Sink these truths of The Nicene Creed deep into your heart and confess them with your lips.
- By the grace of God, may you share it with others and hold fast to the rule of faith; contending for the truth once for all delivered to the saints.

PERSONAL APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

- How does your baptism shape your daily identity as one who belongs to Jesus?
- In what ways can you live more consciously as someone who is “baptized into Christ” in your work, relationships, and witness?
- How does your hope in the resurrection shape the way you view suffering, aging, or death?
- What would change about your priorities or attitudes if you truly lived each day in light of your coming resurrection?
- How might your anticipation of the “life of the world to come” deepen your worship, patience, and faithfulness today as you await Christ’s return?

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth;
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;
who for us and for our salvation
came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary,
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried;
and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets;
and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church;
we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and we look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.